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NSC BRIEFING

17 June 1954

JAPANESE POLITICAL SITUATION

- I. Continuing inability of conservative elements to achieve political stability impairs long-term prospect of Japan as a firm US ally.
 - A. Refusal of many conservatives to support Yoshida in the 3 June Diet incident has weakened the government's hand in dealing with leftist parliamentary violence.
 - B. Bitter opposition to Yoshida's leadership has prevented a conservative merger, which would restore the government's majority in the Diet.
 - C. Irresponsible press attacks on the government and the conservative camp generally has aided the leftist cause by misrepresenting the issues and confusing the public.
 - D. Involvement of all major conservative parties in the recent scandals has lowered their prestige and damaged the cause of parliamentary government.
- II. The Bikini radiation incident revealed a strong undercurrent of resentment against the United States, which probably stems from the Occupation, but includes post-Occupation relationships as well.
 - A. These resentments were prevalent among the second echelon bureaucrats, who succeeded in blocking US investigations and efforts to aid the victims.

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B. Japanese government was indifferent to US interest in maintaining necessary security and ineffectual in curbing sensational anti-American press stories.

III. A strong neutralist and isolationist sentiment and a desire to sever close ties with the US was revealed by the radiation incident.

- A. The popular reaction to irrational stories and the people's readiness to panic indicates a serious national vulnerability to a Communist psychological-military operation threatening an atomic attack. This could produce a national stampede which might make American bases untenable.
- B. Resolutions and appeals by the Diet, civic, and Communist-front groups calling for the ending of nuclear tests, barring of atomic weapons, and official guarantees that Japan will not be used as a base for atomic attack may lead to demands for a revision of the Security Treaty.
- C. Mounting awareness of Japan's exposed position to nuclear attack has prompted a questioning of the feasibility of Japanese rearmament. The fear that a military build-up will provoke an attack which Japan's forces cannot meet has strengthened existing desires to remain aloof from the world power struggle.

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IV. Japan's passive attitude toward Asiatic regional security arrangements demonstrates desire for more independent role and less dependence on the United States.

- A. Japanese Foreign Ministry official has discounted as premature any Japanese participation in an anti-Communist defense organization. Japanese officials have expressed opposition to any direct involvement in Indochina.
- B. Japan fears that US policy may involve national commitments for which the nation is unready and which would adversely affect their long-range interests in Asia.
- C. Japanese officials tend to resent the fact they are not taken into US confidence in the formulation of Asiatic policy.
- D. Japanese willing support US policy that provides economic or other benefits but desire to avoid any involvement in hostilities. Extremely sensitive to possible use of Japanese as mercenaries or in a situation of "Asians fighting Asians."

V. Japan regards the war criminals issue as political, rather than legal.

- A. Popular sentiment is increasingly sympathetic toward war criminals, who are regarded as sacrifices for Japan's defeat.

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B. US refusal of large-scale amnesty is regarded as discrimination against Asians in the light of allegations of more favorable treatment accorded German war criminals.

C. Asian nations have freed all Japanese war criminals.

VI. Orientation of teachers and intellectuals has permitted Communist propaganda to make serious inroads.

A. Recent incidents have revealed the use of Communist textbooks and other material in the schools.

B. Leftist intellectuals have infiltrated many respectable publications and dominate large segment of Japan's information media.

VII. Japanese official and popular opinion feels that US support enables South Korea to engage in activities inimical to Japan.

A. American-supplied ships and armament are used to enforce the Rhee Line and exclude Japanese fishing operations from international waters between Japan and Korea.

B. Japan tends to blame US failure to take strong position and lack of understanding of the Oriental mind as permitting friction between two American allies, Japan and Korea.

C. Some Japanese have belief US deliberately allowing the Japan-Korea hostility to stimulate Japanese rearmament.

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VIII. Government's political weakness hinders vigorous domestic economic policy needed to assure a reasonable degree of economic well being and promotes the search for a "panacea."

A. Inability to stand firm for necessary but popular economic policies.

B. Excessive reliance upon US economic aid.

1. Desire to interpret US statement on continued "high level" of procurement as commitment to keep it as \$800-900,000 level and to imply that "Japan has done its part but the US has not" if level falls.

C. Tendency to view trade with the Soviet Bloc as an attractive panacea for unfavorable trade position.

IX. A majority of Japanese leaders realize Japan must cooperate with the US for the next four or five years; but for the long term they look increasingly toward Asia to regain their international prestige.

B. The continued presence of American forces and bases is an irritant to Japanese national pride as shown by the anti-base campaign conducted by the leftists in the summer of 1953. The Japanese are sensitive over their dependence on the United States for security and resent any action implying

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- C. The degree of Japanese cooperation with the US will depend on the extent to which such an alignment not only meets Japan's need for security and foreign trade opportunities but also satisfied its expectations for economic and military assistance and for treatment as a sovereign equal.
- D. Current adverse developments are significant in that their continuation will increase existing pressures for independent courses of action in Asia and make Japan more vulnerable to Communist tactics of conciliation and threat.